

## **REMARKS**

Claims 15-19 and 20-21 are pending in this application, and stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Applicants' disclosure of the prior art, (Fig. 15 and pages 3-4 of the instant specification), or Aida et al., when taken with Heidemann, (U.S. Patent No. 5,335,109).

Applicants respectfully disagree with this rejection.

On page 7, lines 1-3 of the Office Action, the Examiner states, "Applicants' arguments as to the differing purposes for the filter of Applicants and that of Heidemann is not relevant as the pending claims fail to require any filter purpose beyond mere filtering." Applicants respectfully disagree that the pending claims fail to require any filter purpose beyond mere filtering. On the contrary, independent claims 15, 16, and 18 require an optical filter for ascertaining a level of an optical input signal through a detector.

In addition, Heidemann discloses an optical amplifier used for an optical receiver. In the amplifier, an output of the optical amplifier is detected, and filters 6a, 6b are provided to absorb an exciting light before detecting the output light, but a level of an optical signal can not be correctly measured by using the output of the amplifier, because amplitude spontaneous emission (ASE) is generated in the amplifier.

Heidemann fails to teach an input monitor, which detects an input of the optical amplifier. On the contrary, a typical photo diode is provided to convert the output light of the optical amplifier into an electrical output signal.

Thus, in the amplifier of Heidemann, there is no coupler to divide an input signal light at an input of the optical amplifier, as no monitor is provided at the input.

Further, in the amplifier of Heidemann, there is no filter to pass only an input signal light at an input of the optical amplifier, as no monitor is provided at the input.

Aida discloses an optical amplifier, in which an exciting light is supplied in the same direction as a signal light, that is, in a forward direction. In the amplifier, the direction of the exciting light supplied is different from or opposite to the present invention, and therefore, there is no filter that filters an optical light divided by a coupler.

As understood above, Heidemann is of backward excitation, while Aida is of forward excitation, and it is not reasonable to combine Heidemann and Aida having opposite excitation direction. In addition, Heideman has no monitor to detect an input signal light, and therefore there is no coupler and no filter for filtering an output of any coupler.

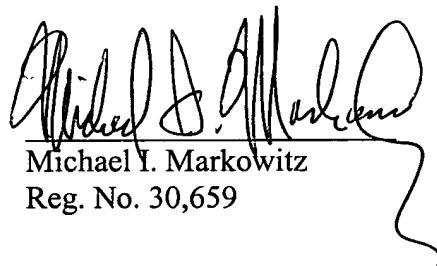
**CLOSING**

An earnest effort has been made to be fully responsive to the Examiner's objections. In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that claims 15-21 are in condition for allowance. Passage of this case to allowance is earnestly solicited.

However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, he is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper, not fully covered by an enclosed check, may be charged on Deposit Account 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,



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